THE GREAT SIN, AND CHIEF GUILTINES OF SCOTLAND,

In the contempt of the GOSPEL.

As it was branched out in Particulars, by the Commission of the Generall Assembly, in the Year, 1650.

Now Re-printed at the desire of the Synod of *Lothian*, for the Fast appointed by them in the Year, 1654.

Edinburgh, Printed by *A. A.* ANNO DOM. 1655.

At *Edinburgh*, the ninth day of *Novemb.* 1654.

THe *Synod of* Lothian *and* Tweddail, *considering the continuing evidences and effects of Gods wrath, and His Hand still stretched out against the Land, Do finde it their duty, to stirre up themselves, and these under their charge, to accept the punishment of our iniquities, and to turne to him that smites us: And therefore do seriously recommend to the severall Presbyteries within their bounds, that, from time to time, as they shall have occasion, they appoint and keep Solemn Fasts, for stirring up the people to be humbled in the sense of their iniquities, and to repent for the same; And specially for the contempt of the Glorious Gospel of the Son of GOD, and not imploying of Him in His Mediation and Offices, for reconciliation and amendment: Which, as it is the chief cause of the LORDS controversie against us: So, unlesse this be reformed, we cannot expect that our other iniquities shall be amended, or that the LORD will turn from the fiercenesse of his anger against us. And albeit this hath been recommended in many former Causes of Humiliation, and particularly insisted on in a Printed Paper of the Commission, 1650. Yet there is cause to fear, that the people do either little understand or lay to heart the hainousnesse of this sin: And therefore the Synod seriously recommends, that Ministers be the more carefull in their Doctrine to lay it out before them. Extracted.*

SINS

Relating to the

GOSPEL-ORDINANCES.

Irſt: To the Word. Neglecting to come and attend on the Preaching of the Word, both on the LORDS Day, and on week dayes, in theſe places where ſuch exerciſes are on theſe dayes.

2. Not coming to the Preaching of the Word, for the right end, *viz*, to find communion with Chriſt, and a taſte of his goodneſſe and excellency, and to be built up in the moſt holy faith: but either out of cuſtome, or to eſchew cenſures, or to ſatisfie and hold off the challenges of a naturall conſcience, or ſome by-reſpect; And not preparing the heart before hand in ſecret, to come with Godly fear and reverence, humility, ſpirituall hungring and thirſting after the Kingdom of God and the righteouſneſſe thereof, and deſiring as new born babes the ſincere milk of the Word, to grow thereby.

3. That when the people are at the Preaching of the

Word, beside great careleſneſſe, overlineſſe, ſleeping, wandring of the heart, and inadvertency to what is Preached; the Word is not heard as an Ordinance and mean appointed of God to work upon, and carry in grace and comfort unto the heart, but is only regarded as other diſcourſes proceeding from mens ability and parts, and is accordingly eſteemed by the moſt part, or at moſt is only made uſe of, as a mean of informing the judgement.

4. That in the Preaching of the Word, neither do Miniſters ſpeak the ſame as the Oracles of God, not remembring themſelves to be the ambaſſadours of Chriſt, ſpeaking in Gods ſtead: nor do the people preſent themſelves in ſo immediat a way before God himſelf, as to receive the Word not as the word of man, but as the true Word of God; Whence it cometh to paſſe that there is litle trembling at the Word, and ſo litle rejoiving in it.

5. That people in the hearing of the Word, content themſelves with mans teaching, and do not, in the conviction of their own blindneſſe, and utter inability of themſelves to perceive the things of the Spirit, and of the inſufficiency of the outward means without Gods immediat work therewith upon the heart, imploy himſelf to teach them inwardly by his Spirit, joining with the outward means, according to the promiſe of the Covenant, *They ſhall be all taught of God.* Whence it cometh to paſſe that there is ſo much Preaching, and ſo litle profiting, ſo much learning, and ſo litle ſpeed coming in the knowledge of God.

6. The

6. The not mixing of the Word Preached with faith, while as in the hearing thereof, even these who seem to give most heed thereunto do for the most part, rather imploy the judgement, to consider and judge of the pertinency, coherence, the way of uttering of the Doctrine delivered; or in a meer speculative way to apprehend the matter and truth of what is spoken, than they do labour with the heart to close with, imbrace and apply to themselves the truth Preached.

7. No care to lay up, and hide the Words of Christ in the heart, to remember the same for use making: But letting them slip and run thorow; which the Apostle accounteth a neglecting of the great Salvation of God, (*Heb.* 2.1.3.) Nor imploying the Spirit to bring the Word that hath been heard, but forgotten, to remembrance: Not making conscience to confer on the Word Preached, and to whet it one upon another. Not taking pains, nor delighting in it in privat, to read, and meditate on it.

2. IN relation to the Sacraments. And first in generall and common: Not making use of them as Seals of the Covenant of Grace, and promises thereof made to us in Christ; but laying all the weight of confidence upon themselves, and being content with the deed done, which was the ordinary sin of the Jews in the use of Circumcision, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Law, so often charged upon them in Scripture. Then particularly,

In Baptism. 1. In Parents bringing their Children thereunto, either out of meer fashion and custom, as meerly to have a difference put between them and unchristned

christned people, or in effect as unto a meer Ceremony: and not from any sense that they are unclean from unclean, born dead in sins, and children of wrath of themselves, defiled with Originall guilt and corruption; nor from a desire that they may be spiritually regenerated, incorporated unto Christ, to be made partakers of the vertue of His Death and Resurrection, to be washed from their filthinesse in the blood of Christ, and to get interest in the Covenant of Grace, and promises thereof, sealed up unto them. 2. Not setting themselves in the Administration of this Sacrament to consider and prize the free love and grace of God, which hath prevented us, and our seed, in providing such a fountain for sin and uncleanneſse in Christ, making such a Covenant with us, so well ordered in all things, and sure, preventing us and our seed with the Seal thereof; nor to apply the Covenant and the promises thereof for our selves and our seed, and this Sacrament as the Seal of the same. 3. The great and evident slighting of the Administration of the Sacrament, while as few in the Congregation joineth therein either for their own edification, or to hold up the baptized to God, that he might blesse his own Ordinance to them, and receive them in amongst his Children in Christ: And many withdraw themselves from the Administration thereof, as if it did not concern them, and only the Minister and Presenter were to be actors in it. 4. Parents not making conscience, to make known unto their Children, when they come to years of Capacity, their Baptisme, the ends and use thereof, and the obligation thereby lyeth upon them as consecrated to Christ. 5. The not making use of this Sacrament all along the course of

of our life, for renewing and ſtrengthening our comfort in the faith and aſſurance of our Regeneration and Adoption; and of our intereſt in God, as our God and Father in Chriſt, and for ſtrengthening through Chriſt our reſolutions and endeavours of Mortification, and newneſſe of life: Which is a great deſpiſing of this Ordinance.

In the Lords Supper; 1. The great prophanation thereof, by the comming and admitting thereunto, of many groſſe ignorants, who cannot diſcern the Lords Body, nor know how to examine themſelves: many prophane Ones, godleſſe Livers, without the Worſhip of God in private, and into many places, all ſorts of perſons promiſcuouſly, without making a difference between the precious and the vile, whereby the Blood of Chriſt is much prophaned (altho the conſtitutions of our Kirk, were they well obſerved, do ſufficiently guard againſt theſe evils) which, no doubt, is one of the main ſins, for which God hath been provoked to ſuffer ſo much of our blood to be ſhed: See 1 *Cor.* 11, 30.

2. The little or no care or pains that is taken for preparation to ſo high and holy an Ordinance, wherein we are called to the neareſt and moſt familiar Communion with Chriſt, that is here upon earth: moſt part contenting themſelves, giving their preſence at a Preparation Sermon, many not making conſcience of ſo much as this. Very few ſeparating themſelves as is needfull, to Examine themſelves, that, being ſenſible of their guiltineſſe, ſpirituall inlacks, *&c.* they might come with

with humble, broken, and contrite spirits, with spirituall hunger and thirst for Christ Crucified: And sincere purposes of heart to forsake their former sinfull courses, and to renew their Covenant with God, in the strength of Christs Grace.

3. The great and lamentable blockishnesse of the most part, in the participation of this Ordinance, who, may be, have some kind of amazement at the Solemnities thereof, but do no wayes therein exercise themselves in remembring the Lords Death till he come again, to apply the same to themselves, for peace with God, and mortifying the body of sin, for working deep Repentance, and Gospel-sorrow for sin, and getting the Love of Christ more kindled in them, and their hearts inlarged with greater thankfulnesse toward him, who loved us, and gave himself for us. And on the other hand, the great heartlesse sinfull dejection of many sensible souls, who at no time are readier to be plunged in legall heavinesse, and feeding as it were on Gall and Worm-wood, then at this Ordinance, wherein they ought to be most rejoicing through faith on the propitiation in the Death of Christ, so familiarly set forth therein to them.

4. That the time and occasion of this Sacrament, is used by the most part, only for some outward restraint of grosser sins, for a day or two before and after, but all such goodnesse being as a morning Cloud, no constancy nor reall Reformation, but presently turning to wonted, naturall, worldly, and carnall courses, Notwithstanding renewed remembring of the Death

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of Christ, and Profession of renewing Covenants with God.

3. IN relation to the Ordinance of Discipline.

1. Much partiality in the administration thereof, with respect of persons, and according to affection; which appeareth in that, While as Offences and Scandals in meaner persons are taken notice of, challenged and censured: There is not the like Christian Freedom, faithfulnesse and zeal used toward such as are more eminent for wealth, place or dignity in the world.

2. Want of a Spirit of Meeknesse, sometimes in the administration thereof, whereby men, if GOD peradventure would give them Repentance, might be recovered out of the snares of Satan. And, on the other hand, want of zeal often times, to save others with fear, plucking them out of the fire.

3. Much vilifying, contemning of the Censures and Exercise of Discipline; yea, hating thereof, and the Officers of the Kirk for it.

4. Not making use of it as a spirituall Medicine and Means of Salvation: but as a meer Punishment, which as it is in it self a mis-apprehension and abuse of this Ordinance: so is (no doubt) the cause of so much impatience and indignation against it in people, and of so much inequality and mixture of selfish affection in the administration thereof.

5. The great formality that is every where in the use

thereof, while as, so be it that persons under censure continue out their set time and dayes of Censure, little care or respect is had of the effects for which it was instituted, to wit, humiliation of heart and godly sorrow, bringing forth Repentance not to be repented of, which maketh the administration thereof to look too like the way of Popish Pennance.

4. IN relation to Prayer: 1. Great neglect thereof by most part of persons and Families throughout the Land in private and secret.

2. Many, more eminent persons in the world, accounting the performance thereof in their Families (although this be incumbent to them by their place and station) a disparagement, and therefore turning it over upon others, as a Service below them.

3. In the publick Prayers of the Kirk, Peoples lying by from joyning therein all along with their Spirits, which should be striving together with the Minister: either muttering words of their own, or taking liberty to themselves to be idle in the Work, and roaving in their thoughts, as if the Minister only were to be an Actor in that Service.

4. Not using this Ordinance as a mean of communion with God, and of obtaining blessings from Him: But using it meerly as a duty, and many as a matter of meer task. Whereof many may be convinced by this, That they do not make conscience, nor set themselves to observe what commeth of their Prayers, how they

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are taken off their hand, what speed they have come, and what answer they get.

5. The little care that is had either by Ministers or others to pray in the Spirit, or to imploy the Spirit of Grace and Supplication for this Service: The most part in their performances thereof too evidently acting meerly their own memory, invention, wit, &c. and that often times with apparent affectation.

RElating more immediately to Christ Himself, and the free grace of God in him, which is the Matter and Object of the Gospel: As,

1. Grosse ignorance in the most part, and great shortcoming of the best in the knowledge of Jesus Christ His Person, Offices, His blessings and benefites, of the Covenant of Grace established in Him, and the way of making use of Christ and the Covenant of Grace.

2. Undervaluing and misprysing of Christ, communion with Him, and His spirituall graces and blessings. Which appears most evidently, by the great neglect of the use of these means and exercises, publick, private and secret, wherein He offereth Himself to be sought and found: the great wearying of them, greater willingnesse and readinesse to bestow time and pains upon things worldly, even vanity and trifles, than on these: preferring the interests of creatures to the interests of Christ, and not giving him the preheminence above all: by the readinesse which appears in people, in times of tryall, to comply with sinfull courses, to the prejudice of Christs

Cause, and the hazarding of their own peace with God, for maintaining their ease, temporary safety and worldly commodities, rather then to deny themselves, take up their crosse and follow Him.

3. Not receiving of Christ, nor making use of him as he is held forth in the Gospel, in his fulnesse of grace, nor living by faith in him, more especially in not receiving and making use of his free-Grace and imputed Righteousnesse for Justification, acceptation before God, and for peace of conscience; while as most part securely rest on meer outward Church-priviledges: many confide in their own Morall Honesty performances and duties; So going about to establish their own righteousnesse, and following duties this way to make their Peace and Reconciliation thereby with God. And even the best Professours do not so purely and intirely rest on his Righteousnesse as the Gospel requireth: as well appear by these things amongst many others: heartlesse fears, misbelief, scarring to apply Christ, and to make use of the promises, not rejoicing in Christ and his propitiation with humility, when there is a discovery, challenges and apprehensions of want, short coming and failing of duties, which in effect is in a degree, and in part, an establishing our own righteousnesse, and not submitting to the Righteousnesse of God, Not making use of Christ, for Sanctification, according to the promises of the Covenant, and not acting in a way of dependence on him, in all the performances of our common Christian calling, and of particular lawfull vocations, for direction, quickening, strength to mortifie corruptions, to every duty, and to carry us through against

against discouragements, and tentations: but acting only, or most part by the strength of our own wits, abilities, and pains.

In not making use of the Mediation and Intercession of Christ, in approaching to the Throne of Grace, in Prayers, Supplications, and Thanksgivings (while as many do neglect Prayer altogether) albeit they have some course of performance of this duty, yet know not what it is to put their Prayers up to God through the Mediator, though they may perhaps name His Name, but do as that *Uzziah*, who would offer Incense himself, neglecting the High Priest: And even Beleevers themselves doth not directly, distinctly, and stedfastly in their approaches to God, eye Christ, to offer all their service through him, nor do come with that humble boldnesse and full assurance of faith in God as a Father, wherewith the intercession of Christ warrandeth them to come, *Heb.* 10.19,20,21,22.

4. Not walking as becometh the Gospel of Christ, in Righteousnesse, Godlinesse, and Sobriety: many notwithstanding their Profession of the Gospel, and claiming interest in Christ and his Grace, yet living loose, prophane, godlesse, carnall and earthly in their way, in effect, turning the Grace of God unto wantonnesse, and security, and taking liberty to sin, because Grace doth abound. And even the best not so constrained with the love of Christ, to live to him who died for them, nor striving to keep the thoughts of the love of Christ, and the free Grace of God in him, upon their hearts, so fresh and constant, as they should be, to keep them watchfull, tender, zealous, and enlarged for God, and his honour.

6. In

6. IN relation to the operations of the Spirit, wherein the Gospel is the Ministration, and maketh it effectuall: As,

1. Prophane mocking, miscalling, and mis-interpreting the tender and accurate walking of the Godly in the wayes of God, as unnecessary and proud precisenesse, and their spirituall exercises, as fantasticknesse, melancholy, or madnesse: Which is a horrible sin, sib to that which is unpardonable; yet, very frequent amongst carnall and naturall people.

2. The meer naturall and morall way of living in a civill honesty, and sitting down contented therewith, of the most part of people, not labouring in their conversation to walk after the Spirit, *i. e.* upon Spiritual Principles, according to the Spirituall Rule (of Gods revealed Will in his Word) nor for Spirituall ends, the Honour of God, Glory, and Immortality.

3. Not observing and yeelding unto the knockings of the Spirit, whereby Christ maketh tender to come into hearts, that he may sup with them, and they with him; resisting and quenching his motions, whereby he stirreth up to duties, stifling or putting by his challenges, whether in publick or secret, which tend to Repentance, Humiliation, or withdrawing from sin; not being tender of his Presence and consolations, to intertain the same; but grieving him, by misprizing them, refusing them, careless walking, in not attending on his direction and guiding, in giving way to known sinfull thoughts, and lustings in a continued tract, altho not growing up to a full accomplishing of them, and sometimes in giving way even to grosser out-breakings, and in not watching against predominant

minant corruptions, whereof even the best are much guilty.

4. Not delighting in, nor improving spirituall company and spirituall exercises.

5. OF Ministers, in relation to their Preaching of the Gospel: As,

1. Many not labouring to set forth the Excellency of Christ, in his Person, Offices, and the unsearchable Riches of his Grace, the New Covenant, and the way of living by Faith in him: nor making this the main and chief Theme and matter of their Preaching, as did the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 3. 2. 2 *Cor.* 4. 5. *Col.* 1. 28. Nor Preaching other things with a relation to Christ; to wit, Not Preaching convictions, reproofs, discoveries of sin, and of short comings in duties, and threatnings, to lead to Christ, to prize him the more highly, and to embrace him the more earnestly; especially for Justification, and pressing duties in a meer legall way; not urging them, as by the Authority of Gods Commandements; so from the love of Christ, and the grace of the Gospel, nor pointing and directing people to their furniture for them in Christ: Oftentimes craving hard, but giving nothing wherewith to pay.

2. What they Preach of Christ, and the matters of the Gospel, not Preaching the same in a Gospel-way: Whereof see, 1 *Cor.* 3. from the beginning, at length.

3. Not commending, as they ought, neither their own work, whether of meditation, or delivery: nor their hearts to Christ, that He might give the increase: but

but going about the work, either altogether in their own strength, or much that way.

Often times not speaking, because they believe, and many not seeking for communion with Christ, in their own personall estate: and to feel the power of the Word upon their own hearts, that they might speak so.

These branches of contemning and abusing of the Gospel, are thought fit, for the better information of all, to be held forth at this time, as being most obvious, recommending withall to Ministers, to apply themselves to make a more full and particular discovery thereof. As is not doubted but they will do, according to their wisdom and understanding in the Gospel, and the experience they have by observation of their own hearts, and of the wayes and consciences of People.

FINIS.